

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 AID-05 SAB-02 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /085 W
-----242341Z 088901 /73

R 242055Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1202
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO
USUN NEW YORK 0587
AMEMBASSY GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PANAMA 2109

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, ILO, PN
SUBJECT: VISIT OF DANIEL L. HOROWITZ, USG REPRESENTATIVE TO ILO

REF: STATE 49411

SUMMARY: DURING HIS TWO-DAY VISIT, HOROWITZ MET WITH
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND LABOR, AND WITH REPRESENTA-
TIVES OF WORKER AND EMPLOYER SECTORS. ALL INDICATED THAT
PANAMA GENERALLY SHARED U.S. OBJECTIVES, SUBJECT TO SOME
OTHER CONSTRAINTS ON PANAMANIAN FREEDOM OF ACTION. THE
VISIT WAS VERY USEFUL AS AN EDUCATIONAL AND CONSCIOUSNESS-
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RAISING DEVICE REGARDING OUR OBJECTIVES IN ILO. WE
BELIEVE PANAMA WILL BE COOPERATIVE TO THE EXTENT THAT SHE DOES
NOT THEREBY JEOPARDIZE OTHER--AND ESPECIALLY LATIN--SUPPORT
WHICH SHE SEEKS AS THE INTERNATIONAL COMPONENT OF HER STRATEGY
ON THE CANAL ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING HIS TWO-DAY VISIT TO PANAMA, MR. HOROWITZ MET WITH

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS NICOLAS GONZALEZ-REVILLA; MINISTER OF LABOR ADOLFO AHUMADA; CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AURELIO BARRIA; AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF DEMOCRATIC LABOR CTRP PHILIP DEAN BUTCHER.

2. TO EACH, HE OUTLINED OBJECTIVES OF PRESENT U.S. POLICY TOWARD ILO, EXPLAINING WE SOUGHT TO REVERSE. HE STRESSED THAT WE DID NOT WISH TO LEAVE THE ORGANIZATION, AND HOPED THAT AT THE END OF THE TWO-YEAR NOTICE PERIOD WE COULD DISCERN A SUFFICIENT DISPOSITION BY OTHER MEMBERS TO RETURN TO THE ORIGINAL PURPOSES OF THE ILO TO PERMIT US TO REMAIN. TWO SPECIFIC ISSUES LIKELY TO ARISE AT THE NEXT ILO CONFERENCE (AMENDMENT OF THE CONFERENCE'S STANDING ORDERS, AND THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION) WOULD BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THIS REGARD. THIS DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY THE USG CABINET COMMITTEE, BUT IN THIS AND ALL ASPECTS OF POLICY TOWARD THE ILO, THE USG WAS ACTING IN CLOSE AND CONTINUING COOPERATION WITH THE US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE AFL-CIO, WHICH FULLY SHARED GENERAL USG OBJECTIVES DESPITE OCCASIONAL DIFFERENCES IN POSITION ON SOME SPECIFIC ILO ISSUES. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES OF THOSE WHOM MR. HOROWITZ MET.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER: MINISTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR VISIT, AND SAID PANAMA GENERALLY SHARED US OBJECTIVE IN ILO. HE PROMISED TO THOROUGHLY STUDY US PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT OF CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS. HE SAID PANAMA'S REPRESENTATIVES AT ILO CONFERENCE WOULD RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS, AND WOULD COOPERATE WITH US TO FULLEST EXTENT CONSISTENT WITH PANAMA'S OWN OTHER INTERESTS.
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4. LABOR MINISTER: PANAMA STRONGLY DESIRED THAT NEITHER US NOR ANY OTHER COUNTRY LEAVE ILO; PANAMA'S POLICY WAS THAT ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED, BUT WITHDRAWAL OF IMPORTANT MEMBERS WOULD ONLY WEAKEN IT. MINISTER EXPRESSED GENERAL SYMPATHY WITH US VIEWS ON EROSION OF TRIPARTITISM, RESPECT FOR DUE PROCESS AND AVOIDANCE OF POLITICIZATION IN PANAMA, HE NOTED, HAD REFRAINED FOR THIS REASON FROM BECOMING INVOLVED IN CONTROVERSY OVER CONDEMNATION OF CHILE. HE SHOWED SOME UNEASINESS ABOUT PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS, HOWEVER. IF A COUNTRY FELT STRONGLY ABOUT AN ISSUE WHICH MIGHT BE SUBJECTIVELY REGARDED AS STRICTLY POLITICAL BY OTHERS (HE CITED PANAMA AS AN EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH HASTENING TO SPECIFY THAT THIS IN NO WAY INDICATED ANY INTENT TO SURFACE THE CANAL ZONE ISSUE AT ILO), THAT COUNTRY MIGHT BECOME SO FRUSTRATED BY COMPLEX PROCEDURAL BARS TO RESOLUTIONS THAT ITS INTEREST IN THE ORGANIZATION WOULD EVAPORATE. HOROWITZ REPLIED THAT NORMAL ILO

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION AND FOLLOW-UP WOULD DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH ACTUAL VIOLATIONS OF ILO STANDARDS, REGARDLESS OF MOTIVATION OF A COMPLAINANT IN BRINGING THEM UP. IF NO VIOLATION OF ILO STANDARDS EXISTED, THE ISSUE DID NOT BELONG IN THE ILO NO MATTER HOW STRONGLY A MEMBER STATE FELT ABOUT IT. AHUMADA SAID PANAMA WOULD REVIEW THE SUBSTANCE OF HOROWITZ' PRESENTATION, AND OF ITS POLICY TOWARD ILO, AT HIGHEST LEVEL, AND WOULD MAKE ITS DECISIONS BASED UPON TWO CRITERIA: FIRST, ITS OWN NATIONAL INTEREST; AND SECOND, ITS OBJECTIVE THAT THE ILO BE PRESERVED AND STRENGTHENED. HE ADDED THAT THIS YEAR, HE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE PERSONALLY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PANAMA 2109

5. CTRP SECRETARY GENERAL: BUTCHER, SPEAKING FOR DEMOCRATIC SECTOR OF PANAMANIAN LABOR, EXPRESSED COMPLETE SUPPORT OF US OBJECTIVES IN ILO, WHICH WERE DIRECTED TO COUNTERING TENDENCIES WHICH HE HAD ALSO

NOTED WITH CONCERN. CTRP FRATERNAL TIES WITH AFL-CIO WERE ALSO HIGHLY IMPORTANT IN THE STRENGTH OF THIS SUPPORT, HE SAID. AS WE KNEW, PANAMA'S LABOR VOTE IN ILO CONFERENCE PLENARY ROTATED ANNUALLY AMONG THE THREE PRINCIPAL NATIONAL CONFEDERATIONS. CTRP HAD IT LAST YEAR; BUTCHER BELIEVED COMMUNIST-DOMINATED CNTP WOULD HOLD IT THIS YEAR. HOWEVER, LABOR REPRESENTATIVES ON CONFERENCE COMMITTEES WERE DRAWN
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FROM ALL THREE CONFEDERATIONS, ALL OF WHOM WERE ON PANAMA'S DELEGATION, AND INSTRUCTIONS ON COMMITTEE VOTES WERE VERY INFREQUENT. BUTCHER SAID HE WOULD SEEK TO ENSURE THAT PANAMA'S LABOR REPRESENTATIVES ON KEY COMMITTEES CAME FROM DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD ATTEND THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE AND HOPED TO MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT THERE WITH US GOVERNMENT AND WORKER REPRESENTATIVES.

6. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: BARRIA WAS PERSONALLY SYMPATHETIC OF USG OBJECTIVES. WHILE HE COULD NOT SPEAK AUTHORITATIVELY FOR MEMBERS OF PANAMANIAN EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, HE FELT THAT MOST SHARED HIS VIEWS AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE ILO AND WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC AND RECEPTIVE TO USG INITIATIVES. ONE HANDICAP WAS THAT EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES WERE VERY INFREQUENTLY INSTRUCTED PRIOR TO A CONFERENCE; HE ASKED IF US COULD PROVIDE TIMELY INFORMATION ON IMPORTANT INITIATIVES TO PERMIT DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTRUCTED POSITION. HOROWITZ AGREED TO PROVIDE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS AS RECENTLY APPROVED BY GOVERNING BODY. BARRIA PROMISED THAT THIS WOULD BE CIRCULATED AND DISCUSSED, AND THAT HE WOULD REPEAT HOROWITZ' PRESENTATION OF US POLICY AND OBJECTIVES FOR HIS PRINCIPALS AND COLLEAGUES.

7. COMMENT: LABOR MINISTER REFERRED MOST CLEARLY TO THE PRINCIPAL CONSTRAINT ON THE GENERAL SYMPATHY WE FOUND FOR OBJECTIVES OF US POLICY TOWARD ILO--THAT PANAMA ALSO HAS AN ISSUE WITH THE US OVER THE PANAMA CANAL THAT OVERRIDES EVERY OTHER CONSIDERATION IN PANAMANIAN POLICY. WE SEE NO SIGNS THAT PANAMA WILL SEEK TO EVOKE THE ILO IN THE CANAL ISSUE AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, HER CONSTANT SEARCH FOR INTERNATIONAL, AND PARTICULARLY LATIN AMERICAN, SUPPORT CAUSES HER TO
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BE HIGHLY RESPONSIVE TO REGIONAL CONSENSUSES ON ANY
ISSUE NOT DIRECTLY GERMANE TO HER OWN. SHE WILL NOT
BREAK SUCH A CONSENSUS FOR THE SAKE OF HER IDENTITY
OF INTEREST WITH US IN THE ILO. NOR WILL SHE TAKE
A LEADING ROLE IN FORMING A CONSENSUS. BUT THE BASICALLY
FAVORABLE DISPOSITION, WHICH MR. HOROWITZ' VISIT
REINFORCED, WILL CERTAINLY FACILITATE HER HONEST
ACCEPTANCE AND SUPPORT OF A LATIN CONSENSUS FAVORABLE
TO OUR OBJECTIVES, AND WILL PROBABLY WITHSTAND A LIMITED
AMOUNT OF DIVERGENCE BY OTHER LATINS WHOSE POSTURES MAY
NOT ACCORD WITH OURS.

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